



Speech by

Rachel Nolan

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

Hansard Tuesday, 13 November 2007

THOMPSON, MR C, FEDERAL MEMBER FOR BLAIR

Ms NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (10.20 pm): In August the Howard government was embarrassed when its own leaked strategy advice from its pollsters, Crosby Textor, advised that it was in big trouble and that its only hope was to campaign hard not against Kevin Rudd but against state Labor governments. As the Crosby Textor memo was splashed across the front pages of the nation's newspapers, at least the Prime Minister had the good grace to look embarrassed. However, it would seem that the member for Blair swallowed the document.

For months Cameron Thompson has been assiduously avoiding a discussion about his own record as a federal MP, instead engaging in a concerted campaign to whip up fear and loathing around a series of state issues. In June he called a public meeting promoting objections to the state's preservation of a rail corridor linking Ipswich and Ripley—an effort that was remarkable given Mr Thompson's complete failure to deliver any transport infrastructure from the federal government. In August he was campaigning against the state regarding the replacement of Amberley State School—an effort which required him to put his hand over his ears and sing whenever anyone pointed out that it was the federal government which was, in fact, forcing the closure of the school and that it had taken him more than two years to secure a promise of funding for its replacement. Two weeks ago, Cameron Thompson had found a new-found concern—splashed across the front page of the *Queensland Times*—that the state was using Ipswich as a 'dumping ground for paedophiles', never mind that in nine years in federal parliament Mr Thompson had never mentioned this grave concern before.

Last Thursday, though, Mr Thompson took his new-found diligence on state issues to a whole new level, releasing a newsletter trumpeting that the state was proposing to close Bremer State High School—a school located in the heart of my electorate, which is nearly 50 years old and which has well over 1,000 students. The problem with Mr Thompson's claim is that he quite simply made it up. The truth is that the state, with no help from the Commonwealth—which has cut its share of funding to state schools—has provided \$75 million in new funding for upgrades at Bremer State High School and surrounding schools under the Tomorrow's Schools program. As part of that funding, a proposal is being considered to build a new Bremer senior college, while retaining the existing site for a junior high school—hardly a proposal to close the school. Mr Thompson may be following the Crosby Textor advice, but this erroneous claim is causing real concern to real students and their families. It is a misleading campaign tactic that is morally bereft.

In nine years as the member for Blair, Mr Thompson has failed to deliver an upgrade to the Ipswich Motorway, he has failed to deliver federal support for the Ipswich CBD, and he has stood by as the Commonwealth's share of federal funding for public health and education has declined. It is little wonder, then, that he is lying about state issues. The only alternative is for him to tell the truth about his own abysmal federal record.